

Part I. Introduction

The State of Utah is vulnerable to natural and technological (human-caused) hazards that threaten the health, welfare and security of our citizens. The cost of response to and recovery from potential disasters can be substantially reduced when attention is turned to mitigating their impacts and effects before they occur or re-occur.

Hazard mitigation is defined as any cost-effective action that has the effect of reducing, limiting, or preventing vulnerability of people, property, and/or the environment to potentially damaging, harmful, or costly hazards. Hazard mitigation actions, which can be used to eliminate or minimize the risk to life and property, fall into three categories: first, those that keep the hazard away from people, property and structures; second, those that keep people, property and structures away from the hazard; and third, those that do not address the hazard at all but rather reduce the impact of the hazard on the victims such as insurance. This mitigation Plan has strategies that fall into all three categories.

Hazard mitigation actions must be practical, cost effective, environmentally and politically acceptable. Actions taken to limit the vulnerability of society to hazards must not in themselves be more costly than the anticipated damages.

Capital investment decisions must be considered in conjunction with natural hazard vulnerability. Capital investments can include homes, roads, public utilities, pipelines, power plants, chemical plants, warehouses and public works facilities. These decisions can influence the degree of hazard vulnerability of a community. Once a capital facility is in place, few opportunities will present themselves over the useful life of the facility to correct any errors in location or construction with respect to hazard vulnerability. It is for these reasons that zoning ordinances, which could restrict development in high vulnerability areas, and building codes, which could ensure that new buildings are built to withstand the damaging forces of hazards, are the most useful mitigation approaches a city can implement.

Often, hazard mitigation is a neglected aspect within emergency management. When local governments place a low priority on mitigation implementation activities relative to the perceived threat, some important mitigation measures may be neglected in favor of higher priority activities. Mitigation success can be achieved, however, if accurate information is portrayed through complete hazard identification and impact studies, followed by effective mitigation management. Hazard mitigation is the key to greatly reducing long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects. Preparedness for all hazards includes response and recovery plans, training, development, management of resources and the need to mitigate each jurisdictional hazard.

A. Purpose

The purposes of this Plan are to (1) identify threats to the community, (2) create mitigation strategies to address those threats, (3) develop long-term mitigation planning goals and objectives, and (4) fulfill federal, state and local hazard mitigation planning obligations. Mitigation actions in particular would serve to minimize conditions that have an undesirable impact on our citizens, the economy, environment and the well being of the State of Utah. This Plan is intended to enhance the awareness and to provide mitigation strategies for elected officials, agencies and the public of these hazards and their associated threat to life and property. The Plan also details what actions can be taken to help prevent or reduce hazard vulnerability to each jurisdiction.

B. Scope

The Wasatch Front Natural Hazards Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Plan was developed in accordance with the requirements of the FEMA Section 322 regulations, the Utah Division of Homeland Security (DHLS) and local planning agencies. The goal of this Plan is to assist the five counties of the Wasatch Front region (Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Tooele and Weber) in reducing the costs of natural disasters by providing comprehensive hazards identification, risk assessment, vulnerability analysis, mitigation strategy and implementation schedule. Regulations set forth by FEMA were followed during the development of this Plan. All participating jurisdictions are listed on pages 9-12. Future monitoring, evaluating, updating and implementation will occur annually or following any natural disaster. A major revision will occur every five years. Annual or any interim Plan review, updates and revisions will be the responsibility of each adopting jurisdiction.

C. Authority

Federal

Public Law (PL) 93-288 as amended, established the basis for federal hazard mitigation activity in 1974. A section of this Act requires the identification, evaluation and mitigation of hazards as a prerequisite for state receipt of future disaster assistance outlays. Since 1974, many additional programs, regulations and laws have expanded on the original legislation to establish hazard mitigation as a priority at all levels of government. When PL 93-288 was amended by the Stafford Act, several additional provisions were added that provide for the availability of significant mitigation measures in the aftermath of Presidential declared disasters. Civil Preparedness Guide 1-3, Chapter 6- Hazard Mitigation Assistance Programs, places emphasis on hazard mitigation planning directed toward hazards with high impact and threat potential.

President Clinton signed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) into law on October 30, 2000. Section 322 defines mitigation planning requirements for state, local and tribal governments. Under Section 322, states are eligible for an increase in the federal share of hazard mitigation, if they submit a mitigation plan (which is a summary of local and/or regional mitigation plans) that identifies natural hazards, risks, vulnerabilities and actions to mitigate risks.

State

Some examples of legislation enhancing the ability of government and persons to mitigate, respond and recover from natural disasters include the Governor's Emergency Operation Directive, The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, amendments to Public Law 93-288, as amended, Title 44, CFR, Federal Emergency Management Agency Regulations, as amended, State Emergency Management Act of 1981, Utah Code 53-2, 63-5, Disaster Response Recovery Act, 63-5A, Executive Order of the Governor 11, and the Emergency Interim Succession Act, 63-5B.

Local

Local governments play an essential role in implementing effective mitigation. For the purposes of this Plan, local governments include not only cities and counties, but also special service districts with elected boards. Each local government will review all present or potential damages, losses and related impacts associated with natural hazards to determine the need or requirement for mitigation action and planning. In the cities and counties making up the Wasatch Front Region, the local executives responsible for carrying out plans and policies are the county commissioners and city or town mayors and administrators. Local governments must be prepared to participate in the post-disaster hazard mitigation team process and pre-mitigation planning as outlined in this document in order to effectively protect their citizens. All jurisdictions in the WFRC Region participated in the development of this plan.

Association of Governments

The Association of Governments have been duly constituted under the authority of Title XI, Chapter 13, Utah Code Annotated, 1953, as amended (The Inter-local Cooperation Act) and pursuant to Section 3 of the Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Utah, dated May 27, 1970, with the authority to conduct planning studies and to provide services to its constituent jurisdictions.

D. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the PDM Plan include coordinating with local governments to develop a regional planning process that meets each planning component identified in the FEMA Region VIII Crosswalk document, Utah Division of Homeland Security (DHLS) planning expectation and local input. Another goal is to meet the need of reducing risk from natural and technological hazards in Utah through the implementation of and updating of regional plans.

Short Term Local Goals

The following general goals were used in the development of the PDM Plan. They are shown from highest to lowest priority.

1. Life safety protection.
2. Eliminate and/or reduce property damage.
3. Protect emergency response capabilities (critical infrastructure).
4. Protect/create communication and warning systems.
5. Protect emergency medical services and medical facilities.
6. Ensure mobile resource survivability.
7. Protect critical facilities.
8. Ensure government continuity.
9. Protect developed property, homes, businesses, industry, education opportunities and the cultural fabric of a community. Combine hazard loss reduction efforts with the environmental, social and economic needs of the community.
10. Protect natural resources and the environment.
11. Promote public awareness through education of community hazards and mitigation measures.
12. Preserve and/or restore natural features.

Long Term Local Goals

1. Eliminate or reduce long-term risk to human life and property.
2. Aid private and public sectors in understanding the risks they may be exposed to and identify mitigation strategies to reduce those risks.
3. Avoid risk of exposure to natural and technological hazards.
4. Minimize the impacts of risks that cannot be avoided.
5. Mitigate the impacts of damage as a result of identified hazards.
6. Accomplish mitigation strategies in such a way that negative environmental impacts are minimized.
7. Provide a basis for prioritizing and funding mitigation projects.
8. Establish a regional platform to enable the community to take advantage of shared goals and resources.

Objectives

The following objectives are meant to serve as a measure upon which individual hazard mitigation strategies can be evaluated. These objectives become especially important when two or more projects are competing for limited resources.

1. Identify persons, agencies or organizations responsible for implementation.
2. Project a time frame for implementation.
3. Explain how the project will be financed including the conditions for financing and implementation (as information is available).
4. Identify alternative measures, should financing not be available.
5. Be consistent with, support, and help implement the goals and objectives or hazard mitigation plans already in place.
6. Projects should significantly reduce potential damages to public and/or private property and/or reduce the cost of state and federal recovery for future disasters.
7. Projects should be practical, cost-effective and environmentally sound after consideration of the options.
8. Projects should address a repetitive problem, or one that has the potential to have a major impact on an area or population.
9. Projects should meet applicable permit requirements.
10. Discourage development in hazardous areas.
11. Projects should contribute to short and long term solutions.
12. Project benefits should outweigh the costs.
13. Projects should have manageable maintenance and modification costs.
14. Projects should accomplish multiple objectives when possible.
15. Projects should be implemented using existing resources, agencies and programs when possible.

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